

### Appendix 3. Description of the gender-blinding intervention and additional data

Ledin et al. (2007) described using gender-blinding during one submission cycle of the European Molecular Biology Organization's (EMBO) Long-Term Fellowship in 2006 [1]. They reported that this had no effect in reducing the gender gap, so the gender-blinding was not used in subsequent years. We contacted the corresponding author to obtain additional information on how gender-blinding was implemented.

#### Author's description of how the intervention was implemented:

"We eliminated all references to gender from the applications, letters of recommendation and interview reports that were sent to the committee for scoring. Specifically:

1. We replaced the first name with the initials in the application and the letters of reference.
2. We removed any indication of gender in the letters of reference by replacing he or she with he/she and her or his with her/his. Same for the interview report.
3. Our selection procedure involves a personal interview with an EMBO Member expert in the area of research of the applicant. Obviously we could not gender blind the interviewer, but removed any reference to gender in the report as describe above. To test whether the reports were written in such a way that gender was obvious (as described for example in the paper by Trix and Penska: the colour of glass) several of us read all (gender blinded) reports and tried to guess that gender of the applicant from the way the report was written. Of the 280 reports that we read, we ventured guesses in 50 cases, of which 50% of our guesses were correct. From this we concluded that gender could not be inferred from the reports themselves.
4. Given the publications (first names were indicated by an initial) the committee members could have looked the person up and find out their gender. Since each committee member looks at over 180 applications they usually do not take the time to do that. But of course, that is a caveat."

#### Additional data provided by author:

##### **EMBO Long-Term Fellowships**

|                   | <b>Applications</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Awards</b> | <b>%</b> | <b>Success rate %</b> |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>2002</b>       |                     |          |               |          |                       |
| Female applicants | 347                 | 43       | 68            | 41       | 20                    |
| Male applicants   | 453                 | 57       | 100           | 59       | 22                    |
| Overall           | 800                 |          | 168           |          | 21                    |
| <b>2003</b>       |                     |          |               |          |                       |
| Female applicants | 469                 | 43       | 64            | 40       | 14                    |
| Male applicants   | 611                 | 57       | 112           | 60       | 18                    |
| Overall           | 1080                |          | 138           |          | 16                    |
| <b>2004</b>       |                     |          |               |          |                       |

|                   |      |    |      |      |    |
|-------------------|------|----|------|------|----|
| Female applicants | 533  | 47 | 65   | 40   | 12 |
| Male applicants   | 604  | 53 | 98   | 4860 | 16 |
| Overall           | 1137 |    | 163  |      | 14 |
| <b>2005</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 589  | 48 | 89   | 45   | 15 |
| Male applicants   | 647  | 52 | 109  | 55   | 17 |
| Overall           | 1236 |    | 198  |      | 16 |
| <b>2006</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 593  | 48 | 87   | 40   | 15 |
| Male applicants   | 644  | 52 | 133  | 60   | 21 |
| Overall           | 1237 |    | 220  |      | 18 |
| <b>2007</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 582  | 45 | 82   | 39   | 14 |
| Male applicants   | 706  | 55 | 130  | 61   | 18 |
| Overall           | 1288 |    | 212  |      | 17 |
| <b>2008</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 590  | 48 | 81   | 38   | 14 |
| Male applicants   | 628  | 52 | 134  | 62   | 21 |
| Overall           | 1218 |    | 215  |      | 18 |
| <b>2009</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 657  | 49 | 115  | 45   | 18 |
| Male applicants   | 675  | 51 | 143  | 55   | 21 |
| Overall           | 1332 |    | 258  |      | 19 |
| <b>2010</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 802  | 48 | 123  | 45   | 15 |
| Male applicants   | 866  | 52 | 152  | 55   | 18 |
| Overall           | 1668 |    | 275  |      | 17 |
| <b>2011</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 748  | 46 | 103  | 38   | 14 |
| Male applicants   | 885  | 54 | 165  | 62   | 19 |
| Overall           | 1633 |    | 268  |      | 16 |
| <b>2012</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 739  | 48 | 115  | 47   | 16 |
| Male applicants   | 816  | 52 | 132  | 53   | 16 |
| Overall           | 1555 |    | 247  |      | 16 |
| <b>2013</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 793  | 48 | 77   | 42   | 10 |
| Male applicants   | 852  | 52 | 108  | 58   | 13 |
| Overall           | 1645 |    | 185  |      | 11 |
| <b>2014</b>       |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 742  | 45 | 86   | 35   | 12 |
| Male applicants   | 906  | 55 | 161  | 65   | 18 |
| Overall           | 1648 |    | 247  |      | 15 |
| <b>2010-2014</b>  |      |    |      |      |    |
| Female applicants | 3824 | 47 | 504  | 41   | 13 |
| Male applicants   | 4325 | 53 | 718  | 59   | 17 |
| Overall           | 8149 |    | 1222 |      | 15 |

## Reference

1. Ledin A, Bornmann L, Gannon F, Wallon G. A persistent problem. Traditional gender roles hold back female scientists. EMBO reports. 2007;8(11):982-7. Epub 2007/11/02. doi: 10.1038/sj.embor.7401109. PubMed PMID: 17972895; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC2247380.